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FREE SPEECH AND HUMAN RIGHTS: INTERNATIONAL FILMMAKER
EXCHANGE AS A KEY COMPONENT FOR U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY AND
PROMOTION OF U.S. AND GLOBAL VALUES

By

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Department of Defense

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Joint Advanced Warfighting School in partial
satisfaction of the requirements of a Master of Science Degree in Joint Campaign

Planning and Strategy.

The content of this paper reflect my own personal view and are not necessarily endorsed
by the Joint Forces Staff College or the Department of the Defense.

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Abstract

The United States Government currently struggles with a lack of international credibility. Regaining credibility is key to effective utilization of the nation's informational element of national power. The U.S. Government has an unexpected ally in the fiercely independent artistic community which values freedom of speech and expression that the Constitution protects. The American artistic community has retained strong international credibility even as the American Government has lost credibility. It is key to leverage the American artistic talent to not only reach out to the world with the best and most respected instrument of truth, but also for the U.S. Government to build bridges with the artistic community, working towards better communication, while mitigating negative and counterproductive friction.

Initiating an informal funding of various projects through an independent U.S. Non-Governmental Organization construct, the U.S. Government can invest in truthful and influential media products made by the finest creative artists in the world, American filmmakers, writers, producers, and actors. In addition, an ongoing exchange with international writers, filmmakers, producers, and actors could create continued collaboration and dialogue throughout the arts community in support of U.S. Strategic Communication goals.

This collaboration and sense of unity has the potential to spread to the far corners of the globe through the far-reaching arm of modern media. Through artistic exchanges and subsequent production of films, programs, music, and other venues, niche audiences

would have the opportunity to learn about America through a credible means without the fingerprints of the U.S. Government and without a tailored agenda. This would touch on both the diplomatic and the informational realm in maximizing one of the great strengths of American ability to tell a story and create indelible images that can change the world.

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What U.S. officials don't seem to register is that no amount of information pumped out by U.S. Public Diplomacy will be enough to improve the U.S. image. The problem ultimately is not lack of information but lack of credibility.

-R.S. Zaharma¹

Introduction

Strategists have formulated that nations in pursuit of their goals apply four elements of national power. These elements are commonly referred to as diplomatic, informational, military, and economic (DIME). In the United States, Strategic Communication is considered the informational aspect of the element of national power. There is no single definition for Strategic Communication, but multiple related definitions throughout various doctrine and policy documents exist. According to Jeffrey Jones, former Director for Strategic Communications and Information on the National Security Council, Strategic Communication is the “synchronized coordination of statecraft, public affairs, Public Diplomacy, military information operations, and other activities, reinforced by other political, economic, military, and other actions to advance U.S. foreign policy interests.”² This description is the most useful for examining how this element of national power is applied to support the interests and objectives of the United States.

The United States has been working to utilize the informational realm more effectively. The predominant assessments of the Defense Science Board Task Force on

¹ R.S. Zaharna, "U.S. Credibility Deficit," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, December 13, 2006, <http://www.fpif.org/fpiftxt/3796> (accessed February 19, 2009).

² Jeffrey Jones, "Strategic Communications: A Mandate for the United States," No. 39 Joint Forces Quarterly, www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jc/jfg_pubs/1839.pdf (accessed September 10, 2008).

Strategic Communication 2004 and 2008 states that the “The [Defense] Department will work closely with interagency partners to integrate Strategic Communication into U.S. national security policy planning and operations.” According to the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, “Victory in the long war ultimately depends on Strategic Communication by the United States and its international partners.”³

It is also generally accepted within the government that Public Diplomacy is a subset of Strategic Communication. Strategic Communication is the overall national voice of the U.S. National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication, although the Department of State Public Diplomacy is the lead agency. However, there is one line of thought that identifies Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy as two separate entities, this paper addresses all elements of United States government communications as Strategic Communication. Using Jones’ definition of Strategic Communication, there are three organizations that play the most significant role in Strategic Communication. These are the Department of State, which is responsible for Public Diplomacy (PD), the Department of Defense, which has responsibility for Information Operations (IO) and the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), an independent federal government agency that oversees all U.S. non-military international broadcasting (with Secretary of State as one of nine board members). The Department of State Public Diplomacy has the lead in Strategic Communication. IO encompasses Electronic Warfare, Military Deception Operations, Computer Network Operations, Psychological Operations, and Operational Security. This apparently robust apparatus of

³ Donald Rumsfeld, "Quadrennial Defense Review Report," *Defense Link*, February 6, 2006, <http://www.defenselink.mil/qdr/report/Report20060203.pdf> (accessed September 10, 2008).

Strategic Communication weaves through both the Department of State and the Department of Defense, but this still underutilized element of national power cannot be fully leveraged without repairing its achilles heel, the current credibility of the United States messages broadcast to the world.

The fact that the United States government lacks credibility with many non-Western nations is not all due to any one current or past issue, but the sum of many words and actions that add up to losing the Strategic Communication initiative. The informational elements of adversaries or skeptical medial outlets are much quicker to respond to situations and conditions than the United States. This response time is due to a slower bureaucratic system of approving messages for release, or the time needed to organize and obtain resources necessary to initiate a Strategic Communications campaign at a certain region or adversary. As the former Secretary of Defense stated regarding the Strategic Communication directed dilemma of the United States, “In this environment, the old adage that ‘A lie can be halfway around the world before truth has its boots on’...the longer it takes to put a Strategic Communication framework into place...the vacuum will be filled by the enemy...that most assuredly will not paint an accurate picture.”⁴

Although some of the most capable government personnel lead and support U.S. Strategic Communication, the complexities pose multiple problems. These complexities involve issues such as acquiring resources for the Strategic Communication campaign, planning and executing a response through personnel from the White House, Department

⁴ Rumsfeld, Donald H; Remarks delivered at the Harold Pratt House, New York, N.Y., February 17, 2006.

of State, Department of Defense, and possibly the National Security Council (through the non-permanent Strategic Communications representative), examining legalities and binding regional agreements, and examining the technicalities of methods needed to deliver the Strategic Communication messages.

Mere basic bureaucratic issues do not take into account other details such as creative content and analysis of potential successful elements of such a Strategic Communications campaign. This is no easy task as for the government, especially when corporations hire marketing firms to figure out how to entice a consumer to buy a particular bar of soap. Marketing and creative content are both critical to Strategic Communication and in order to connect with a target audience without damaging rapport or trust.

Two of the most criticized elements of the United States Strategic Communication apparatus are a lack of cultural knowledge and context and a lack of initiative in reaching out to specific global audiences until a problem arises in a particular region of the world. U.S. Strategic Communication in general is hampered by and through a lack of regional and cultural leaders in the field who are able to match the cultural knowledge and context, regional historical trends, and the ability to marry these together with policy and decision makers in a timely manner. This reactive nature of current Strategic Communication is problematic because it is more difficult to create positive dialogue when there is already an anti-U.S. voice in the region. This situation is referred to as a “War of Ideas.” Meaning there are conflicting ideologies, values, and messages between the people of the Middle East and the West, with the outcome being acceptance of one worldview. The term “War of Ideas” is misleading and

counterproductive and should be replaced with an approach to Strategic Communication based on proactive dialogue, understanding, and exchange. Although policy makers are aware of the importance of Strategic Communication, the construct continues to fall short in reaching and influencing audiences. Strategic Communication must be employed to preempt or mitigate negative images of the U.S. and further an understanding of and appreciation for American ideals and values.

One of the largest groups that symbolize the independence and freedom of the United States is the artistic and media community. With the global 24-7 pervasive media, nearly all of the American crises, conflicts, political infighting, and diplomatic activities are reported in some form. How the global audience receives impressions of events and activities by the United States are often determined by how information is presented and projected through mediums tailored to a geographic region. There is freedom of speech and freedom of expression.

The National Security Strategy 2006 states that the values of the United States are, “To champion human dignity, strengthen alliances against terrorism, defuse regional conflicts...to encourage global economic growth, to expand the circle of development, to cooperate with other centers of global power...”⁵ Many view the new administration as an excellent time period for taking steps forward in the informational realm. It is becoming evident that an emphasis on Strategic Communication is critical to achieving aims of the United States by augmenting the other elements of national power.

Ambassador Karen Hughes, previously the Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy

⁵ George W. Bush, "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America," (2006).p.1

and Public Affairs, stressed the importance of the entertainment industry in Strategic Communication. During Ambassador Hughes' July 22, 2005 confirmation hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee she said, "Our music and film industries, artists and entertainers create powerful impressions-sometimes good, sometimes bad, but always powerful. I welcome ideas to more fully engage the private sector because I believe that this engagement is critical to our success." ⁶

This paper advocates utilizing a U.S. sponsored international artistic exchange in film and media specifically in order to build cultural bridges, dialogue, and understanding between different cultures and rebuilding international trust in the United States by producing and distributing compelling films that are of interest to a non-American population. The key strategy is the international artistic collaboration as well as the actual products produced. This collaboration would build continuing access to the current artistic leaders, influential and trendsetting artists, and most importantly the promising artists as influencers of the future.

This should be accomplished through exchange working closely with leading international artists to tell important stories that are not the typical Hollywood or Bollywood studio financed film. The key to this exchange is maintaining a revolving community of highly professional and respected filmmakers to collaborate on films that they believe matter, but may not have a chance of being financed by a major studio due to

⁶ U.S. Department of State, "The Mission of Public Diplomacy: Karen Hughes; Nominee for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs," *Strategic Communication on Cyberspace & Information Operations Study Center*, July 22, 2005, http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/state/hughes_testimony05july.htm (accessed November 03, 2008).

the non-commercial type of content. This promotes the United States values of free speech and universal human rights among others. It would be a way for the artists to channel their activism into constructive projects that parallel American values and subtly project them. This exchange should be worldwide in a Non-Governmental Organization type construct to avoid pressure from having the U.S. government tell the story instead of the professional artists.

Thesis Statement

As part of Strategic Communication, international artistic exchange in an NGO construct is critical to the restoration of U.S. credibility throughout the world and creating an alliance of internationally influential pro-U.S. value artists.

Methodology:

The research method for this study consists of:

- Review of history of Strategic Communication to include
- Review of PD/SC statutes/authorities
- Literature review of current PD/SC strengths and weaknesses
- Historical review of U.S. Strategic Communication Strategy
- Analysis of current structure
- Review of current global levels of U.S. credibility
- Assessment of current exchanges; to include structure, finances, successes
- Recommendations for the structure of future artistic exchange
- Creative control factors

Chapter 1: Strategic Communication as an element of National Power

Our national security strategy depends upon securing the cooperation of other nations, which will depend heavily on the extent to which our efforts abroad are viewed as legitimate by their publics. The solution is not to be found in some slick PR campaign or by trying to out-propagandize Al-Qaeda, but rather through the steady accumulation of actions and results that build trust and credibility over time.

-Secretary of Defense Robert Gates⁷

The Informational element of the DIME (Diplomatic, Informational, Military, Economic) is a latent element of American national power. As a world leader, the informational arm has much more to do with shaping the environment for political discourse and renewed trust between the United States and other nations. The Informational element supports and promotes initiatives that the United States would like to believe are altruistic and lend aid to the well being of the global community. By alienating other nations and cultures, however we limit our initiatives and add pressure on the other elements of national power. This leaves a void allowing ideas, images, and impressions that are counter to the interests of the U.S. and the greater global community.

According to the Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC), the U.S National Strategy for Public Policy and Strategic Communication states: “Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication should always strive to support our nation’s fundamental values and national security

⁷ Kristin M. Lord, *Voices of America: U.S. Public Diplomacy for the 21st Century*, (The Brookings Institution, 2008).p.8

objectives”.⁸ The National Security Strategy of the U.S. states its values are, “To champion human dignity, strengthen alliances against terrorism, defuse regional conflicts, to prevent threats from weapons of mass destruction, to encourage global economic growth, to expand the circle of development, to cooperate with other centers of global power, and to transform America’s national security institutions to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century”.⁹ The PCC further maintains all communication and Public Diplomacy activities should, “underscore our commitment to freedom, human rights, and the dignity and equality of every human being, reach out to those who share our ideals, support those who struggle for freedom and democracy and counter those who espouse ideologies of hate and oppression.”¹⁰

Two common terms linked to Strategic Communication are “soft power” and “smart power.” The term soft power was originally coined by Dr. Joseph Nye relating to how a nation gains or achieves what it wants to achieve through attraction rather than coercion. Soft power is spawned from aspects of a country’s culture, political ideals, and policies. It is directly linked to credibility as legitimacy of action is what embodies soft power, and creates a willingness among other countries to be extensions of U.S. policy. In relation to the Global War on Terror, Nye states that “America’s hard power had

⁸ Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC), *U.S. National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication*, Strategic Guidance (DC: United States Printing Office, 2007), p.2

⁹ George W. Bush, "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America," (2006). Page 1

¹⁰ Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC), *U.S. National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication*, Strategic Guidance (DC: United States Printing Office, 2007), 34. Page 2

removed a tyrant...[but] was costly in terms of our soft power-our ability to attract others to our side.”¹¹ Smart power is the distribution of soft and hard power to achieve a national goal or policy objective, commonly referred to as the stick-and-carrot approach in Nye’s definition, refer to coercion (sticks) or the carrot (attraction).

U.S. National Strategic Objectives for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication

The U.S. National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication states that:

*America must offer a positive vision of hope and opportunity that is rooted in our most basic values, with our partners, we seek to isolate and marginalize violent extremists who threaten the freedom and peace sought by civilized people of every nation, culture, and faith, and Americans must work to nurture common interests and values between American and peoples of different countries, cultures, and faiths across the world.*¹²

Regarding strategic audiences, the PCC asserts there are “tools to reach broad audiences, such as television, radio, Internet, press and public affairs operations.” There is the need to tailor and direct at “narrower, more discrete groups, especially those that because of their expertise, stature, or leadership roles, influence the decisions and opinions of others.” The specific audience types are: key influencers, vulnerable

¹¹ Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Soft Power* (New York , NY: PublicAffairs).

¹² Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC), *U.S. National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication*, Strategic Guidance (DC: United States Pringing Office, 2007), 34. Page 3

populations (youth, women, minorities), and mass audiences.¹³

The subtleties are often the key to winning over a certain audience within a targeted demographic. “The traditional approach to Public Diplomacy activity overseas, be it cultural festivals, seminars, economic promotion, or policy advocacy, is that it should all be concluded with “a few words from the ambassador.” In some cases, it would be far more useful to keep the ambassador indoors.”¹⁴ Yet when the United States sponsors an event, it often appears that the event serves to support and promote a United States government agenda.

Credibility, Popularity and National Security

Anti-Americanism is endangering our national security and compromising the effectiveness of our diplomacy. Not only is the United States at increased risk of direct attack from those who hate it most, but it is also becoming more difficult for America to realize its long-term aspirations as it loses friends and influence.

-Independent Task Force on Public Diplomacy¹⁵

¹³ Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC), *U.S. National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication*, Strategic Guidance (DC: United States Printing Office, 2007), 34. p.4

¹⁴ Mark Leonard, "www.foreignpolicy.com," *Foreign Policy Archive*, September 2002, <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/Ning/archive/archive/132/leonard.pdf> (accessed November 22, 2008).

¹⁵ Independent Task Force on Public Diplomacy Sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations, "Finding America's Voice: A Strategy for Reinvigorating U.S. Public Diplomacy, 2003," 2003: 57.

The suggestion that one section of the government attempts to control the media causes damage to the United States' reputation and credibility. As the world "flattens" due to technology and access to communication technologies, it is more difficult to mislead general populations through media. Although this may seem counterintuitive, consider that global audiences have so many sources of information, that it is often difficult to determine truth from half-truth or pure fabrication and rumor. Any media source that attempts or is perceived to be attempting to veer from the truth can quickly become marginalized.

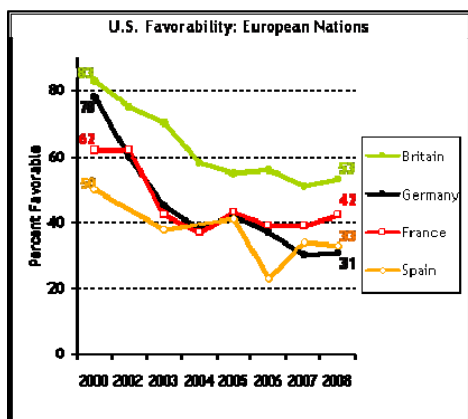
The Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World states in *Changing Minds, Winning Peace: A New Strategic Direction for U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim World, 2003* the difficulty in working through not only U.S. policy initiatives, but also the additional potential loss of support from Arab leaders due to anti-Americanism. "Achieving our interests is far easier if we do not have to buck a tide of anti-Americanism in addition to considered policy opposition."¹⁶

A credibility vacuum within the international arena is a threat to the national security of the United States. This vacuum is indicated by international poll statistics in a Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World sponsored project by Dr. Kristin M. Lord in 2008. The people of 23 varied countries view America's influence in the world more negatively than the influence of North Korea. Additionally, citizens in nations friendly to the U.S. see it in a negative light, 62 percent Canada, 72 percent Germany, 58 percent Australia, and 53 percent Great Britain. 64 percent of the Turkish

¹⁶ Kristin M. Lord, *Voices of America: U.S. Public Diplomacy for the 21st Century*, (The Brookings Institution, 2008). p. 7

people see the U.S. as the greatest threat to Turkey in the future. Nine percent of Egyptians, 12 percent of Pakistanis, 19 percent of Moroccans, and 23 percent of Indonesians believe the primary goal of the U.S. War on Terror is to protect the U.S. from terrorist attacks and not to militarily dominate the Middle East or weaken and divide the Islamic religion and its people.¹⁷

Additional extensive polling conducted by the Pew Research Center between 2000 and 2007 (130,000 respondents) confirms not only the general anti-U.S. stance, but also anti-Americanism. This is important as it draws a clear distinction between the U.S. citizen who is not directly linked to U.S. policy action of the U.S. government. Since 2002, the U.S. image has fallen in 26 of 33 countries where there is a discernible trend in polling. The Muslim countries of the Middle East rate the United States at the lowest levels; the U.S. image has continued to drop since the Global War on Terror began. Even among some of our closest allies, our image has suffered as indicated by the chart below.



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¹⁷ Ibid. p.7

¹⁸ The Pew Research Center, "The Pew Global Attitudes Project," *The Pew Research Center*, June 27, 2007, <http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/256.pdf> (accessed November 19, 2008).

These negative trends can be associated with the unpopular Global War on Terror, and simply be dismissed. The Global War on Terror may indeed have been a catalyst for this negative international view of the United States and of Americans, but the true failure was a lack of proactive Strategic Communication. Instead Strategic Communication was reactive and inflexible as well as limited in scope, organization and appropriate resources. It is critical to have Strategic Communication in place engaging the global community on a permanent continuous basis instead of using Strategic Communication to fix a problem. As an element of national power, it must be perceived as creditable to a target audience.

*Sensitive messages to foreign publics are often best disseminated by people who have something in common with the target audience. For instance, the decision to arrange visits of prominent Muslims living in Britain to Islamic countries after September 11 more convincingly demonstrated British respect for Islam than did any ministerial pronouncements.*¹⁹

Robert Hunter, former U.S. Ambassador to NATO under President Clinton disagreed with the dissolution of the United States Information Agency (USIA) in 1999. Ambassador Hunter recognized the necessity for a USIA type entity as a more-or-less independent entity, clear from directives to take part in manipulation of media to further promote U.S. policies and initiatives. Hunter stated that one of the advantages of placing Strategic Communication under the United States Information Agency was that it, “was

¹⁹ Mark Leonard, "www.foreignpolicy.com," *Foreign Policy Archive*, September 2002, <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/Ning/archive/archive/132/leonard.pdf> (accessed November 22, 2008).

deliberately given a semi-independent status in order to deal with an evident difficulty: how to say something as a government that wouldn't just sound like self-serving propaganda. By keeping a relative distance from the State Departments' diplomats...it put across a view for the United States that was closer to what foreigners who visited here recognized as the real thing." Hunter added that, "credibility does not come from repeating a message often enough or getting everyone to say the same thing, but from a hard-won reputation for accuracy and dispassion."²⁰

The United States Information Agency was a not a completely independent agency, but there was much more latitude on the content allowed to air. The USIA had previously been heavily involved in counter-Soviet and Iron Curtain efforts. Under the Reagan Administration, the USIA gained a more influential seat at the policy-making table, but unfortunately also lost a certain degree of independence. The increase in funding led to more power to accomplish greater outreach, but with a stronger requirement to dovetail with U.S. policy. This would ultimately cause the demise of the agency in the late 1990s as critics highlighted USIA's large budget and lax following of U.S. policy.

Dr. Michael Doran, former Deputy Secretary of Defense for Public Diplomacy asserts the difficulty in creating organic media for a country that supports U.S. policy. Dr. Doran understands the importance of a credible voice and the power of the filmmaker, even if the infrastructure is not in place. "...whose job is it to fund the

²⁰ Nancy Snow, *Propaganda Inc.*, Second Edition (NY, NY: Seven Stories Press, 2002). p. 16

documentary filmmaker who will then make the film and distribute that?”²¹ The ideas are there to make this happen, but there is not a system to bring all of the ideas together. “It's best if this is done by an Iraqi. Maybe the United States would like to provide funds to an Iraqi filmmaker to go out and make this documentary in his own words. Whose job is that? Where are the resources? The government is not even organized to make that happen. There needs to be streamlined mechanisms and people with the resources and the authority to make those things happen.”²²

Due to bureaucratic constraints and approval processes, the United States was unable to reply to statement by Ayman Al-Zawahiri, lieutenant to Osama bin Laden. The comments of Zawahiri have since been described as one of the largest Al-Qaeda blunders. Steven R. Corman, editor of COMOPS, a journal of the Consortium for Strategic Communication, gave Zawahiri a tongue and cheek award for the 2008 Strategic Communication Achievement Awards for loosening “the bolts on the AQ ideology machine” for calling then President-Elect Barack Obama a “house negro.”²³ This main idea here was that the adversary’s Strategic Communication backfired, while the U.S. Strategic Communication efforts to discredit Al-Zawahiri were ineffective.

The U.S. government funded Public Diplomacy websites; Dipnote and America.gov have problems relating to speed of response to extremist rhetoric and

²¹ Dr. Michael Doran, "Statement of Dr. Michael Doran Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Support to Public Diplomacy," *Statement of Dr. Michael Doran* (Washington, DC).

²² Ibid.

²³ Stephen R. Corman, *2008 Strategic Communication Achievement Awards*, December 31, 2008, <http://comops.org/journal/> (accessed January 09, 2009).

actions. Dipnote and America.gov are used for and as outlets for U.S. policy statements as well as respondents and participants in blogging. Messages posted on the Dipnote and America.gov Department of State Public Diplomacy oriented websites have to undergo varying approval processes for their messages, sometimes with permission from the managing editor, but other times must claw through the slow bureaucracy of government for permission to respond to certain sensitive messages and topics. This often creates an inability to respond to damaging messages from hostile entities.

Currently there are additional means that violent extremist organizations use to gain influence over certain populations, and they are becoming increasingly technologically savvy. According to the U.S. Department of State, the Al-Manar channel is supported by the Lebanon based Hezbollah terrorist group.²⁴ Al-Manar broadcasts to the Asia-Pacific region, specifically targeting Indonesia as a home to a large Muslim population. Al-Manar rented Indonesia's Palapa C2 satellite through Indosat. The Department of State acknowledges anti-Israeli and anti-American programs broadcast to Southeast Asia, China, and Australia.²⁵ An ongoing U.S. national security concern is that stations such as Al-Manar are designated by the U.S. Department of State as a "terrorist entity" since 2006. Indosat is located in Indonesia and the 14% ownership by the Government of Indonesia gives the government "a veto right over strategic decisions."

²⁴ Arab Times, *U.S. concerned about Hezb TV in Indonesia*, August 15, 2008, <http://www.arabtimesonline.com/pdf08/aug/15/page%2009.pdf> (accessed September 20, 2008).

²⁵ Ibid.

The Indonesian government claims that companies such as BBC also rent the satellite, and has downplayed the importance of the Al-Manar lease (good through 2011).²⁶

Matt Armstrong, writer and speaker on public diplomacy and strategic communication says that, “I have all the respect for the Dipnote staff, and America.gov for that matter, but they just don’t have the agility or flexibility to respond to this message.”²⁷ Steven Corman and Ed Palazzolo mention in COMOPS’ 18 December 2008 issue, “State Department. Blogging One Year Later (Part 5)”²⁸ that the terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India, and the lack of response from Dipnote suggest that Dipnote is either not as heavily engaged in current events as it should be, or that the permissions to respond to such a global incident were not flexible enough for any information to be posted on the diplomatic blog. “ Yet not a single post about the incident has appeared on the Dipnote blog. This could not be because the event was a low priority for the State Department, since it resulted in a special trip to the region by Secretary Rice.”²⁹

The COMOPS journal personnel commended the efforts of the State Departments’ Digital Medial Team, “Digital Media Team are to be congratulated on the progress that they have made in the last year on Dipnote and the other social media efforts...surprising level of innovation for the federal government...it would improve

²⁶ Ibid).

²⁷ Matt Armstron, *Ayman al-Zawahiri's Racial Epithet*, November 19, 2008, http://mountainrunner.us/2008/11/dipnote_and_agility.html (accessed December 16, 2008).

²⁸ Stephen R. Corman and Ed Palazzo, *State Dept. Blogging One Year Later (Part 5): Going Forward*, December 18, 2008, <http://comops.org/journal/> (accessed 01 09, 2009).

²⁹ Ibid.

these offerings to make them more interactive...social media users want not just information but also dialog.”³⁰ These social media tools are important and successful because there is a dialogue between the U.S. and the target country, vice a monologue.

Regardless of the degree of effective outreach and what appears to be dialogue, strained U.S. credibility currently stands in the way and will continue to stand in the way of positive global acceptance of U.S. initiatives and actions. With pervasive media influence, the days of deception are long gone and create more problems than they solve. President Clinton issued a Presidential Directive (PDD 68) that created an International Public Information group to counteract or manipulate bad press abroad regarding U.S. military operations in Kosovo and Haiti. PDD 68 replaced the provision for National Security Decision Directive Number 77 (NSDD 77) under President Ronald Reagan, which ordered the strengthening of Public Diplomacy in the service of national security objectives. NSDD 77 established forerunners to International Public Information system, an International Information Committee “to assume the responsibilities of the existing ‘Project Truth’ Policy Group,” and an International Political Committee, to aid, train, and organize “support for foreign governments and private groups to encourage the growth of democratic institutions and practices.”³¹

A vacuum of Public Diplomacy coupled with the frantic aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 led to the idea to create an entity of misinformation. Although the remnants of the USIA had been folded into the State Department on

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Nancy Snow, *Propaganda Inc.*, Second Edition (NY, NY: Seven Stories Press, 2002). p.13

October 1, 1999, it had been hampered by funding and personnel cuts. Additionally, State Department and the former USIA were still going through the pains of bureaucratic transformation. The 9/11 attacks and the cheers of approval throughout the Middle East made it quite clear to deduce that the message of unity between the United States and the Muslim world was in tatters. One of the ways to remedy this situation would be to initiate an information campaign to create a positive impression of the United States to the Muslim world.

The DOD created an Office of Strategic Influence (OSI) on October 30, 2001 for “strategic information campaign in support of the war on terrorism.” Mainly it “was to develop a full spectrum influence strategy that would result in greater foreign support of U.S. goals and repudiation of terrorists and their methods.” There was opposition early by U.S. government public affairs officers concerned that there would be damage to their public affairs practices and loss of credibility. This would be due to negative press coverage in the U.S. and abroad due to the concern that disinformation would be planted in foreign media organizations. The Secretary of Defense dissolved OSI on February 26, 2002. One reason for the creation of OSI was that Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith noticed the gap in understanding between the Muslim world and the West, specifically the United States, and sought a solution to the problem. The solution began with Feith contacting Brig. Gen Peter Worden to come up with plans for spreading information to target countries throughout the world. Brig. Gen Worden began the OSI with plans to export \$80 satellite radios with excellent reception and plans to install solar-powered Internet kiosks worldwide in remote regions to influence target populations. In February 2002, news articles emerged that the United States was going to plant disinformation through the OSI. The Pentagon General Counsel examined planning

documents, and reported there was no evidence of any intention to use disinformation. Yet the controversy surrounding this office discredited the entire effort, and the OSI was disbanded.³²

Currently there continues to be money spent by the U.S. to continue Strategic Communication efforts through using highly professional artists with the aim of influencing certain populations. According to *The Washington Post*, the Department of Defense will pay private contractors in Iraq “up to \$300 million” through 2011 for news stories, entertainment programs, and public service announcements.

The media products developed and used in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) have been highly successful and imaginative towards achieving politico-military end states. The products, such as newspaper, and radio addresses have highlighted killings of innocents by insurgents, created a sense of pride for the Iraqis, and now working towards diminishing the influence of Iran. As an example, a contractor produced a video about an Iraqi family that was attacked and had their three daughters kidnapped; the subtext of the video emphasized the need to stand up to local insurgents. This video was offered to television stations in Iraq without their knowledge that it was a product funded by the U.S. government. One of the contractors in responsible for the placement of the news story stated, “They (Iraqi media) don’t know that the originator of the content is the U.S. government. If they did, they would never

³² U.S News & World Report, "How Rocket Scientists got into the hearts-and-minds game," *usnews.com*, April 17, 2005, <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/050425/25roots.b1.htm> (accessed February 04, 2009).

run anything...if you asked most Iraqis...they would say `It came from the government, our own government.”³³

In addition to the lack of transparency of the specific Iraqi Strategic Communication example above, it is more of an Information Operations construct. This Informational Operations construct is geared more toward achievement of theater strategic objectives, rather than addressing multiple variables associated with the overarching regional and global Strategic Communication objectives. A failure by this method creates the potential for loss of global credibility.

The problem for Strategic Communication is that if done in a haphazard and reckless or non-transparent manner, it produces skepticism and lack of confidence in not only the host nation media, but also further creates distrust of the U.S. Government and damages the U.S. reputation in the world.

A credibility gap exists, proven by data. If Strategic Communication is to be effective, it must be credible. Part of the problem can be found in the structure that exists to support Strategic Communication within the United States Government. Part of the problem is that the successful United States Cold War model was dismantled in the 1990s, losing funding and personnel, and was eventually absorbed by the Department of State in October 1999. The most important loss was the loss of a creative and independent approach to Strategic Communication problem solving and planning.

³³ Karen DeYoung and Walter Pincus, *U.S. to Fund Pro-American Publicity in Iraqi Media*, October 03, 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/10/02/AR2008100204223.html> (accessed January 19, 2009).

Chapter 2: Strategic Communication components, structure and history

In fact, while "Public Diplomacy" is presented as a way of convincing the Arabs of America's values - its real target is self-justification. "We are not doing anything wrong - Arabs just don't understand us."

- Dr. James J. Zogby³⁴

Strategic Communication has been a powerful tool wielded since colonial times. John Adams, Samuel Adams, Benjamin Franklin and other U.S. founding fathers recognized that the opinions and perceptions of foreign governments and general population mattered. They used information operations as instruments of first resort in the American Revolution. The leaders of the revolutionary movement developed an informational campaign for support against a common enemy, the British.³⁵ It highlighted positive American messages of justice, equality, independence, and democracy through savvy use of speeches and the media in order to gain domestic and international support for American independence while downplaying potentially hypocritical aspects of previous American loyalties. Objectives of the Strategic Communications campaign were to focus on a gathering of financial and military support from the aristocratic (anti-republican) French. The history of organized U.S. Strategic Communications and the associated mandates will provide a better understanding of the current state of Strategic Communication.

³⁴ James Zogby, "Making Policy Backwards," *Media Monitors Network*, June 22, 2004, <http://usa.mediamonitors.net/Headlines/Making-Policy-Backwards> (accessed November 26, 2008).

³⁵ J. Michael Waller, "Lessons from the Founding Fathers," *The Institute of World Politics*, January 18, 2006, www.iwp.edu (accessed March 26, 2009).

Origins

Edmund Gullion, Dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and a former Foreign Service officer, first established the term “Public Diplomacy” in 1965. The definition deals with influencing public foreign attitudes and opinions on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It goes beyond traditional diplomacy because of the U.S. aim to achieve popular support for U.S. and/or host country initiatives that are in the interests of the U.S. Public Diplomacy was also a fresh term to distance the efforts of the United States Information Agency from appearing to be an agency perpetuating and creating propaganda. The term Public Diplomacy created an esprit de corps and respect among the USIA officers and solidified the USIA’s principle purpose of cultural exchange and public affairs. It gathered additional resources and authorizations mostly from the programs already enacted by the Department of State, and in doing so, aided the argument that there should be a dedicated agency to conduct the cultural outreach and that the USIA was best structured to conduct such work. In 1978, USIA was reorganized to control all U.S. activity in the informational outreach realm.³⁶

The US Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948 (Public Law 402)

The USIA’s basic legislative mandates were the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 signed into law on January 27, 1948, and the Fulbright-Hays Act of 1961. The International

³⁶ Nicholas J. Cull, "'Public Diplomacy' Before Guillion: The Evolution of a Phrase," *USC Center on Public Diplomacy*, 2006: 1.

Broadcasting Act of 1994 reorganized and consolidated all non-military U.S. government international broadcasting into USIA, supervised by the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG). The USIA continues to guide public diplomacy programming following USIA's integration with the Department of State. The Smith-Mundt Act serves as the foundation for United States overseas and cultural exchange programs and brought the Voice of America under the Department of State's Office of International Information.

Smith-Mundt's most controversial component is contained in Section 501, which authorized the government to disseminate information about the United States and its policies abroad. However, it also prohibited the dissemination of that same information domestically. According to Section 501, material produced for foreign production can only be released domestically "for examination only." An act of Congress is required to free a program for domestic release in less than 12 years.³⁷

Smith-Mundt was amended by the Foreign Relations Authorization Act of 1972, which banned domestic dissemination of information prepared for foreign audiences "about the United States, its people, and its policies." The Zorinsky Amendment of 1985 (Sec. 1461-1a) added the prohibition that "no funds authorized to be appropriated to the United States Information Agency shall be used to influence public opinion in the United States, and no program material prepared by the United States

³⁷ Susan B. Epstein, "U.S. Public Diplomacy: Background and the 9/11 Commission Recommendations," *CRS Report for Congress*, 2006: 2-3.

Information Agency shall be distributed within the United States.”³⁸ This ensures that the government does not use government funds to influence the citizens of the United States. Due to technological advances such as the internet, arguments regarding the Zorinsky Amendment are that citizens of the United States have access to information and public diplomacy initially directed at non-U.S. citizens.

Early U.S. Public Diplomacy

The United States Information Agency (USIA) was an independent foreign affairs agency within the executive branch of the U.S. Government. The USIA was known overseas as the USIS, the United States Information Service. The USIA was instrumental in explaining and supporting American foreign policy and promoting U.S. national interests and policies through a wide range of information programs. The agency promoted understanding between the United States and other nations by conducting educational and cultural activities. The Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 stated that the Department of State would acquire the USIA and would no longer operate as an independent agency. USIA was established by President Eisenhower in August 1953 and operated under that name until April 1978, when its functions were consolidated with those of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the Department of State and the agency was called the International Communication Agency (USICA). The agency's name was restored as USIA in August 1982.

³⁸ William J. Clinton, *Reorganization Plan and Report*, December 30, 1998, <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd/pdd-68-dos.htm> (accessed November 02, 2008).

According to Nancy Snow, former Fulbright Scholar and USIA employee, “the focus of the USIA in the 1990s was less on mutual understanding across publics and more on commercial benefit and strengthening corporate-state nexus.”³⁹ Senator Jesse Helms pressured the Clinton administration to shut down the USIA, since the Smith-Mundt Act had no jurisdiction domestically and was viewed as now defunct device of the Cold War. During the late 1990s, the United States government operated under the belief that everyone else in the world already wanted to be like the United States, and supported the initiatives of the United States without any need to chide them.⁴⁰

Prior to being integrated by the Department of State on October 1, 1999, USIA maintained 190 posts in 142 countries with a budget of 1.109 billion dollars for fiscal year 1999.⁴¹ Reductions were implemented in 1997, leaving 6,352 employees. This included 904 Foreign Service personnel and 2,521 locally hired Foreign Service nationals who lived overseas. There were 2,927 Civil Service employees based in the United States; 1,822 worked in international broadcasting and 1,105 engaged in USIA’s educational and informational programs.⁴² The 520 Foreign Service Officers assigned to American Missions abroad carried out the overseas operations of USIA. They managed educational, cultural, and information programs in support of American foreign policy

³⁹ Nancy Snow, *Propaganda Inc.*, Second Edition (NY, NY: Seven Stories Press, 2002). p.12

⁴⁰ Ibid.. p.14

⁴¹ United States Information Agency, *United States Information Agency*, September 30, 1999, <http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/usia/usiahome/factshe.htm> (accessed 09 2009, January).

⁴² Ibid.

objectives and greater understanding.⁴³ Through educational and cultural exchange activities, such as the Fulbright Exchange program, 2,400 foreign leaders and professionals came to the U.S. from 125 countries in 1999.⁴⁴

Current Public Diplomacy

The Foreign Service employs around 6,500 generalists, to include 1,070 public diplomacy officers, and 4,500 specialists.⁴⁵ Public Diplomacy is the second smallest of the five State Department career tracks, with the management career track being the smallest.⁴⁶ The political and economic career tracks are roughly 70% and 30% larger, approximately 1,750 and 1,370 members respectively.⁴⁷ The consular career track is roughly 5% larger, approximately 1,150 personnel.⁴⁸ Criticism of the Public Diplomacy career track is that State Department hiring practices make no special effort to recruit personnel with experience or skills in communicating with and influencing publics.⁴⁹

⁴³ United States Information Agency, *United States Information Agency*, September 30, 1999, <http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/usia/usiahome/factshe.htm> (accessed 09 2009, January).

⁴⁴ United States Information Agency, *United States Information Agency*, September 30, 1999, <http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/usia/usiahome/factshe.htm> (accessed 09 2009, January).p.4

⁴⁵ The United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, *U.S. State Department*, 2008, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/106297.pdf> (accessed November 19, 2008).p.8

⁴⁶ Ibid..p.8

⁴⁷ Ibid.p.8

⁴⁸ Ibid.p. 8

⁴⁹ Ibid.

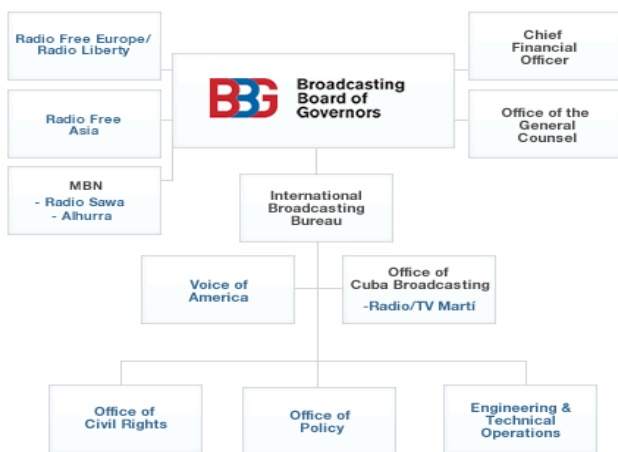
The Broadcasting Board of Governors

The International Broadcasting Act of 1994 established a Broadcasting Board of Governors to oversee USIA's Voice of America (VOA) prior to the dissolution of the USIA. The Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) is in charge of all U.S. civilian international broadcasting, including the Voice of America (VOA), Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Radio Free Asia (RFA), Radio and TV Marti, and the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN)-Radio Sawa and Alhurra. Outside of the BBG, an independent federal agency (although its board reports to the Department State) is the Department of State Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP). The IIP focuses on international audiences about issues regarding U.S. policy, society, and values. It is one of three bureaus reporting to the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs along with Educational and Cultural Affairs and Public Affairs. The IIP conducts outreach support to U.S. embassies and consulates in more than 140 countries worldwide.⁵⁰

Radio Martí, established in 1985, broadcasts 24 hours a day in Spanish to Cuba. TV Martí telecasts 4-1/2 hours daily. Programming consists of news, information, and entertainment from a variety of sources. Prior to the dissolution of USIA in 1999, WORLDNET, USIA's satellite television network, transmitted news, educational and cultural programming 24 hours a day to millions of foreign viewers through American

⁵⁰ The U.S. Department of State, *Bureau of International Information Programs*, January 26, 2009, <http://www.state.gov/r/iip/index.htm> (accessed January 26, 2009).

embassies, USIS posts, and foreign television and cable networks.⁵¹ “The BBG works to serve as an example of a free and professional press, reaching worldwide audience with news, information, and relevant discussions.”⁵²



⁵³ *Broadcasting Board of Governors Organizational Chart.*

⁵¹ United States Information Agency, *United States Information Agency*, September 30, 1999, <http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/usia/usiahome/factshe.htm> (accessed 09 2009, January).

⁵² Broadcasting Board of Governors, *About the Agency*, January 26, 2009, <http://www.bbg.gov/about/index.html> (accessed January 26, 2009).

⁵³ "Broadcast Board of Governors," *Broadcast Board of Governors Organizational Chart*, 2008, <http://www.bbg.gov/about/orgchart.html> (accessed September 14, 2008).

BBG Subcomponents and Organization

Voice of America:

Voice of America (VOA) is the largest U.S. international broadcaster reaching 134 million weekly through radio and the internet in 45 languages. VOA targets countries specifically that have state run news services and alternating points of view. VOA TV broadcasts include original and acquired programs that reflect U.S. policies and are representative of American life in general.⁵⁴

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty:

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) delivers radio, television, and internet to countries of Eastern and Southeastern Europe, Russia, the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East. RFE/RL broadcasts more than 1,000 hours a week. The main operations center is in Prague, Czech Republic, and has 19 bureaus in the general broadcast region.⁵⁵

Radio and TV Marti:

The Office of Cuba Broadcasting runs TV Marti, aimed at the issues of interest for the people of Cuba. Radio Marti broadcasts news and analysis on shortwave, AM,

⁵⁴ Broadcasting Board of Governors, *Voice of America*, <http://www.bbg.gov/broadcasters/voa.html> (accessed November 01, 2008).

⁵⁵ Ibid.

and the internet. TV Marti produces eight hours of programming daily, promoting the free flow of information and ideas to the people of Cuba.⁵⁶

Radio Free Asia:

Radio Free Asia is a private, non-profit corporation broadcasting and publishing online news, information and commentary to nations in Asia where freedom of the press and news are unavailable. RFA broadcasts 301 hours a week over shortwave radio and the internet. RFA broadcasts aim to promote the rights of freedom of opinion and freedom of expression.⁵⁷

Radio Sawa:

Radio Sawa is a 24-hour Arabic language network broadcasting Western and Arabic music as well as current news. It also includes interviews, opinion pieces and commentary. Radio Sawa broadcasts from the U.S. and Dubai, U.A.E., and bureaus throughout the Middle East, and is tailored to specific regions of Egypt, the Gulf, Iraq, Lebanon, the Levant, Morocco and Sudan.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Broadcasting Board of Governors, *Voice of America*, <http://www.bbg.gov/broadcasters/rfa.html> (accessed November 01, 2008).

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Alhurra:

Alhurra is a satellite television channel devoted to news and information. Alhurra covers 22 countries in the Middle East. Alhurra also launched an additional network targeting Arabic speakers in Europe.⁵⁹

Department of Defense Strategic Communication

STRATCOM, Strategic Command is the Department of Defense functional command for IO. The supporting capabilities of STRATCOM are the Defense Support to Public Diplomacy, Information Operations, and Public Affairs. According to Department of Defense Joint Publication 3-13, “The information environment is where humans and automated systems observe, orient, decide, and act upon information, and is therefore the principal environment of decision making. The information environment is made up of three interrelated dimensions: physical, informational, and cognitive.”⁶⁰ Joint Pub 3-13 states that the goal of IO is to maintain information superiority for the U.S. and its partners. IO is made up of several core capabilities. These capabilities are electronic warfare (EW), computer network operations (CNO), psychological operations (PSYOP), military deception (MILDEC), and operational security (OPSEC).⁶¹ Supporting capabilities are

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ The Department of Defense Joint Staff, *Joint Publication 3-13: Information Operations* (Washington, DC, February 16, 2006). I-1

⁶¹ Ibid.

information assurance, physical security, physical attack, counterintelligence, and combat camera.⁶²

2004 and 2007 Defense Science Board Task Force of Strategic Communication

Perhaps the most comprehensive studies of Strategic Communication and the United States government have occurred in the 2004 and 2007 Defense Science Board (DSB) Task Force of Strategic Communication, and the 2001 report on Managed Information Dissemination. The role of the 2007 report was to review and assess Strategic Communication activities since 2004 and to establish recommendations for Strategic Communication in the 21st century.⁶³ According to the 2007 DSB Task force on Strategic Communication: “Positive changes within organizations are real, but they depend to a considerable extent on the skills and imagination of current leaders. Resistance from traditional organizational cultures continues.”⁶⁴ The current structure of Strategic Communication⁶⁵ is tied so strongly to bureaucracy that successes or failures are strongly dependent on personalities. The DSB continues that “The United States will

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Defense Science Board, *2007 DSB Task Force on Strategic Communication*, Review and Assessment (Washington, DC: Defense Science Board, 2008). p.ix

⁶⁴ Ibid.p.xi

⁶⁵ Ibid.p.xii

fail in meeting 21st century national security challenges if it does not take existing government collaboration with civil society to a new level.”⁶⁶

Defense Science Board Recommendations for an Independent Center

“First, that the direction, planning, and execution of the government’s Strategic Communication instrument are government responsibilities...that government cannot succeed...without sustained, innovative, and high-quality support from civil society...that the academic, research, business, and non-profit communities offer deep reservoirs of untapped knowledge, skills, credibility, and agility needed to strengthen Strategic Communication.”⁶⁷

The 2004 DSB for SC recommended institutionalizing relationships between government and civil society through an “independent, non-profit entity that would support the government’s Strategic Communication activities.” The 2007 DSB for SC carries it one level forward stating that, “Government departments can not develop the deep understanding of cultures, influence networks, or information technologies that can be achieved through close collaboration with civil society. The 2007 DSB for SC then goes on to recommend a “Center for Global Engagement...an entity that is accountable, that operates in the public interest, that is outside but closely associated with government.”⁶⁸ Additional recommendations made by the DSB are that this CGE should

⁶⁶ Ibid.p.xiv

⁶⁷ Ibid. p. xiv

⁶⁸ Ibid. p.xii

be a: 501 (c) (3) corporation with an independent director and board of directors, as a means to motivate and attract civil society's best and brightest, and stand as a hub for innovation in cultural understanding, technology, and media among others. The problem with this is that the CGE should also, "respond to multi-agency taskings, coordinated through a National Security Council Deputies Committee for Strategic Communication."

⁶⁹This is of course understandable, but the independent nature and aspects of the chain of command and necessity to respond to taskings begs as to whether there should be some other truly independent entity, free of policy based taskings from the executive branch. The DSB Task force has assessed, analyzed, and synthesized information to come to the conclusion that, "Presidents shape the nations' Strategic Communication in powerful ways...election cycles and episodic commitment have shaped and limited Strategic Communication for decades." ⁷⁰

Tenets of the U.S. Constitution Should Be Guidance for Outreach:

The Strategic Communication strategy of a U.S. presidential administration is short-term in nature and depends on the election cycle. There is a lack of long-term policy regarding global outreach. The U.S. Constitution is a prudent guide for developing such policies. It is important to keep the bedrock values of the U.S. Constitution consistent for consistency in U.S. Strategic Communication from one presidential administration to the next. This keeps Strategic Communication free of the

⁶⁹ Ibid. p. xv

⁷⁰ Ibid.p. xiii

sometimes contradictory messages that arise not only from one administration to the next, but also from within the same administration. Adherence and fealty to the U.S. Constitution will subtly come through and represent the United States as a free nation when U.S. sponsored Strategic Communication is not adroitly used to fulfill short-term policy initiatives. The powerful nature of this honesty is important as the U.S. once again shows the world our sense of freedom, purpose, and dedication to the values that represent a beacon of hope to the world.

Investment in a Long-Term Process

Attempts to evaluate cultural diplomacy can seem like a forester running out every morning to see how far his trees have grown overnight.⁷¹

Current Strategic Communication has come a long way in a very short period of time. There have been massive growing pains since the recent realized value of Strategic Communication. Yet key issues continue to be missed. There are no short-term solutions to problems that will continue to plague the U.S. and the global community. There is an emphasis on what can be measured in a short time period. Capturing such short-term metrics is indicative of short-term Strategic Communication aims. Nicholas Cull, public diplomacy scholar, states of U.S. Strategic Communication and subsets, “In a world where public diplomacy is judged by its short-term ability to move the needle, the longer

⁷¹ Nicholas J. Cull, "Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories," ed. Geoffrey Cowan and Nicholas J. Cull, *The Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science* (Sage Publications) 616 (2008).p.44

term projects (like the use of exchanges) appear to contribute little while the short-term advocacy initiatives alone seem relevant.”⁷² “Moving the needle” is not a sufficient manner to measure all Strategic Communication. Moving the needle is short term, measuring trends instead of creating a stronger woven fabric of focused, and directed Strategic Communication. It is important to capture these metrics for assessment of more shortsighted goals as they relate to specific regional goals. This however breeds a problem when the same methods to measure regional public diplomacy are used to measure broad Strategic Communication. This creates a dangerous environment that leadership may make knee-jerk reactions to satisfy short-term ends while sacrificing long-term projects and lasting results such as exchanges.

Exchanges comprised of filmmakers are an excellent way to invest in future Strategic Communication. It is a long-term solution to a long-term activity. The filmmaker exchange allows the deliverer of the message an opportunity to experience working in the U.S. under the tenets of the Constitution and can become a possible steward of U.S. values by becoming ingrained in the U.S. filmmaker network. This is not a new idea, but the funding for large-scale exchanges and independent projects has not been available, and the U.S. does not realize that control over such projects is not critical. It is important to plant these seeds of future influencers of population now in order to reap the benefits later.

Collaboration on projects is a powerful creative activity that builds bonds and leads to understanding and reinforcing dialogue. “Individuals who engage in conversation may each leave the room with a better understanding of each other.

⁷² Ibid. p.44

Individuals who build or achieve something together...are forever bound by their common experience and/or achievement.”⁷³ Regarding studies on common projects through collaboration, there is a certain trust and admiration achieved. A greater trust between people can foster greater societal trust: “Trust between individuals thus becomes trust between strangers and trust of a broad fabric of social institutions; ultimately, it becomes a shared set of values, virtues, and expectations within society as a whole.”⁷⁴ This fosters both networks for the future and expands credibility.

⁷³ Geoffrey Cowan and Amelia Arsenault, "Moving from Monologue to Dialogue to Collaboration: The Three Layers of Public Diplomacy," *The Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science* (Sage Publications) 616 (2008). P.21

⁷⁴ Ibid.p.23

Chapter 3: Power of Media

Reach of the Media

Maybe the Internet, fiber optics, and satellites really are, together, like a high-tech tower of Babel. It's as though God suddenly gave us all of the tools to communicate and none of the tools to understand.

-Thomas Friedman⁷⁵

Other countries and companies in the Arab world understand the significance and importance of communication and the power that Hollywood wields regarding credibility with the world. A recent investment move conducted by the Abu Dhabi Media Company (ADMC), an arm of the government in the city-state capitol of the United Arab Emirates, was a one billion dollar investment to make video games and movies of the Time Warner subsidiary, Warner Brothers Studios. ADMC is starting a new subsidiary called Imagination, in partnership with three American producers, according to chief executive Edward Borgerding, a former Walt Disney studios executive. In addition to feature films, Imagination will also create shows and short films for the Internet. Borgerding states, "We certainly want to be in that business and see how it works and take advantage of how the media world is evolving." According to the New York Times, ADMC, controlled by the government of UAE, creates pause for media companies in the United States. "Media companies in the United States do not like to be seen making such deals.

⁷⁵ Thomas L. Friedman, *Longitudes and Attitudes:: The World in the Age of Terrorism* (New York City, New York: Anchor Books, 2003). p. 390

The new name, Imagination Abu Dhabi, gives Warner and other film companies a more politically palatable name to put on promotional materials for jointly financed movies.”⁷⁶ Mr. Borgerding also mentioned that Imagenation was looking to work with filmmakers in India, the UK and around the Middle East.⁷⁷

The first movie from ADMC is “Shorts” a “family friendly” movie directed by Robert Rodriguez of “El Mariachi” and “Sin City” fame and starring actor William H. Macy. Mr. Borgerding states that in addition to the English-speaking films, they are also planning on making films for the Arabic-language audience with Arab stars and Middle Eastern filmmakers. These inroads into the Hollywood media machine are due to financial woes of the United States hedge funds and private investment/equity.⁷⁸

The lack of capital investment has created a vacuum where dollars, even those from a state-run media company cannot be turned down. The Hollywood studio Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) hired Goldman Sachs to “explore enhancements” to its investments, as rumors abound that “Merrill Lynch was wavering in its commitment to finance MGM’s United Artists studio”⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Tim Arango, *Abu Dhabi Puts More Cash on the Line in Hollywood*, September 03, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/03/business/worldbusiness/03fund.html> (accessed November 11, 2008).

⁷⁷ Andrew Edgecliffe-Johnson and Simeon Kerr, *Abu Dhabi takes fortunes to Hollywood*, September 02, 2008, (accessed October 21, 2008).

⁷⁸ Tim Arango, *Abu Dhabi Puts More Cash on the Line in Hollywood*, September 03, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/03/business/worldbusiness/03fund.html> (accessed November 11, 2008).

⁷⁹ Andrew Edgecliffe-Johnson and Simeon Kerr, *Abu Dhabi takes fortunes to Hollywood*, September 02, 2008, (accessed October 21, 2008).

According to the New York Times, “Because of cultural and religious issues, financing from the Middle East, especially those from a government used to controlling the media, is unlikely to come without restrictions...Mohamed Khalaf al-Mazrouei, the chairman of the Abu Dhabi Media Company and director general of the Abu Dhabi Authority of Culture and Heritage, a government agency, said: “Abu Dhabi has established itself as a major player in the global economy, as evidenced through recent activity in the energy, real estate and transportation sectors. Media is no different, and Abu Dhabi Media Company is fulfilling its ambition to become a global player in the media industry.”⁸⁰ As Abu Dhabi works to compete and overtake Dubai as the region’s leading media hub, there are still strong Islamic undertones and wariness towards the West and Hollywood, as evidenced by only allowing, “edited versions of *Syriana*, the George Clooney film, because it feared that it would show the Gulf in a negative light.”⁸¹

It is not only Gulf states that are beginning to create large industries around the entertainment and media industries. India’s Bollywood film industry now makes more movies a year than Hollywood.⁸² Bollywood is changing to more of a Western style of movie making. Following the Hollywood standard of shorter, more commercial films

⁸⁰ Tim Arango, *Abu Dhabi Puts More Cash on the Line in Hollywood*, September 03, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/03/business/worldbusiness/03fund.html> (accessed November 11, 2008).

⁸¹ Andrew Edgecliffe-Johnson and Simeon Kerr, *Abu Dhabi takes fortunes to Hollywood*, September 02, 2008, (accessed October 21, 2008).

⁸² Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World* (New York, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008). p. 138-139

with export potential.⁸³ They are moving away from the previous Indian standard of low-budget movies with long movie run times. This speaks to changes in the film industry and a broader international appeal and standardization of film practices and the potential for inter-operability of Western and Eastern writers, film directors, and producers in collaboration on joint productions.

Hollywood/Independent Filmmaker Credibility

As different filmmakers from different regions begin to make films in a more similar construct than before, it opens up the possibility for more filmmaking ventures between not only East and West, but also globally where voices are seldom heard. This potential partnership will lead to increased credibility as the arts, and the U.S. filmmaking industry is often seen as the model of free speech. This of course comes with draw backs in the U.S. as Hollywood and Independent filmmakers are often some of the loudest and most critical voices on social issues and at times anti-establishment.

The world sees this opposition and is amazed by the true freedoms that the U.S. champions by allowing citizens to be critical of initiatives. Employing artists to create interesting, relevant and entertaining stories, and bringing foreign artists to the United States promotes international dialogue, and an exchange of artistic ideas. Through the same philosophy of the traditional Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) and International Military Education Training (IMET), there can be mutual benefit from

⁸³ Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World* (New York, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008). p 77-78.

artistic exchange beyond the immediate and tangible product created during the exchange.

American exchange programs use the art of talented film artists to find their way into the homes of countries that U.S. has strained relationships with. Through this, the U.S. government builds a global community understanding and consensus on issues that the U.S. champions such as freedom of speech and championing human rights. Despite this, these messages are becoming conflicted and can often appear hypocritical due to a saturation of violence and what can be culturally offending adult subject matter in main stream media.

Criticism of Hollywood as Exporter of Ugly American

Bridging the gap between credibility and cultural context of the international community is a challenge. Many Americans complain that Hollywood is responsible for exporting undesirable images of the United States. An article by Newt Gingrich and Peter Schweizer entitled, “We Can Thank Hollywood for Our Ugly-American Image” introduces a summary by researchers stating that, “many people overseas find Americans overbearing, aggressive and domineering,” and that “These results suggest that pop culture, rather than foreign policy, is the true culprit of anti-Americanism,” according to researcher Melvin DeFleurs.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Newt Gingrich and Peter Schweizer, “We Can Thank Hollywood for Our Ugly American Image,” *LA Times*, October 2003.

One of the major challenges to the exporting of the American culture is understanding the cultural context. This is where many of the misunderstandings and misinterpretations occur. This is often because many foreign audiences are not always aware of two opposing perspectives on an issue; or the healthy discourse and criticism that takes place between the liberal and conservative supporters. In addition many of the consumers of U.S. media exports are younger individuals who are just beginning to harness critical thinking capabilities as they relate to policy and diplomacy issues.

The Heritage Foundation published an article by foreign policy analyst Jim Phillips, “Once Upon a Time, Hollywood Helped U.S. Image Abroad,” in which he states he was surprised by the, “prevalence and sources of U.S. conspiracy theories. They had difficulty sorting fact from fiction in Moore’s “mockumentary,” a film that mimicked a documentary to disseminate its propagandistic views,” and that “much of the anti-American disinformation that is eagerly consumed overseas comes not from governments but from Hollywood,” due to the “frequent theme in American-made movies is the threat posed by rogue agencies within the U.S. government or by predatory American corporations that seek world domination.” A recommendation by the Heritage Foundation is that “taking the high road and ignoring the persistent appeal of anti-American conspiracy theories will not work...It is best to confront the theories head on and discredit them. U.S. officials should take every opportunity to knock down conspiracy theories, point out the logical inconsistencies in them, and expose the factual errors whenever possible.”⁸⁵ It is impossible to track every inconsistency on every media

⁸⁵ Conn Carroll, *The Foundry*, July 7, 2008, <http://blog.heritage.org/2008/07/07/once-upon-a-time-hollywood-actually-helped-us-image-abroad/> (accessed November 10, 2008).

outlet and then attempt to stamp them with some brand of truth or not. As tempting as it is to discredit some movies and their makers, by attacking these movies/filmmakers their credibility is reinforced. The best way to increase US credibility through film is by the creation of positive films that stand on their own, therefore marginalizing the less-flattering fictional films.

Hollywood or Independent Filmmaker as Diplomat

Hollywood has long been a powerful projector of the culture, values, and ideals of not only of America, but often exposes international human suffering. Independent filmmaking scene is on the rise and also is a natural means of projecting these ideas. From a unique point of view Hollywood has a corner on the global audio-visual entertainment market, influencing a global community and (for the most part) portraying a positive image of America and Americans. This power was recognized by the U.S. State Department, in a 1948 memo that stated, "American motion pictures, as ambassadors of good will -- at no cost to the American taxpayers -- interpret the American way of life to all the nations of the world, which may be invaluable from a political, cultural, and commercial point of view."⁸⁶

The film industry continues to expand overseas despite rampant piracy and copyright infringement of the film industry products speaking to its great reach. Hollywood and the film industry continue to find ways to capitalize on the economic side

⁸⁶ Martha Bayles, "Now Showing: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly," *The Washington Post*, August 28, 2005.

of the film business. Access to and diversity of selection is coupled with the dynamic technologies of downloadable movies, television programs, and documentaries. The Yale Center for the Study of Globalization reports that between 1986 and 2000 the fees generated by the export of filmed and taped entertainment went from \$1.68 billion to \$8.85 billion, an increase of 427 percent.⁸⁷

Free media and public interest in new, and sometimes raw, material has led to the export of much more provocative media. This media is more easily delivered via the Internet. In a 2003 poll, teenagers were asked about their views on the United States: [Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, South Korea, Mexico, China, Spain, Taiwan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Nigeria, Italy and Argentina]. The conclusion was that "The depiction of Americans in media content as violent, of American women as sexually immoral and of many Americans engaging in criminal acts has brought many of these 1,313 youthful subjects to hold generally negative attitudes toward people who live in the United States."⁸⁸

These negative attitudes now have a global dimension. The 2003 report of the U.S. House of Representatives Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World stated that "Arabs and Muslims are . . . bombarded with American sitcoms, violent films, and other entertainment, much of which distorts the perceptions of viewers." It is not only the international community that is disturbed by these perceptions, but citizens of the United States as well. In April 2005, the Pew Research Center reported that "roughly six-in-ten [Americans] say they are very concerned over what children see

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

or hear on TV (61%), in music lyrics (61%), video games (60%) and movies (56%)."⁸⁹ These revealing statistics show that the overtly violent and sexual messages Hollywood films are sending stand as a key issue on which the East and West agree.

Through combined projects with U.S. and foreign (regionally and culturally aware) filmmakers it will be easier to avoid negative images of U.S. culture that undermine acceptance of conveyed messages and ideals. Creating films in this manner will aid in greater target audience acceptance by avoiding culturally offensive situations and subject matter.

Separation of Media and Policy

After the September 11, 2001 attacks the U.S. government realized that from a cultural standpoint there could be a misinterpretation that the “War on Terror” was a war on Islam instead of an effort to combat terrorist persons and groups and the nation-states and factions supporting it. Karl Rove, Deputy White House Chief of Staff, met with Hollywood producers and major studios shortly following the attacks. The idea was to have someone who could bridge the perceived differences between the United States and the Muslim world. The U.S. government chose to have short snippets of former boxer Muhammad Ali in public service type announcements on Arab media channels. Fadi Ismail, editor for current affairs for the London-based Middle East Broadcasting Centre,

⁸⁹ Ibid.

one of the Middle East's largest television outlets, said that it would not be effective, presenting too simplistic a view that the United States is accepting of Islam. Fadi Ismail went on to state, "Sometimes there is a naïveté in saying Arabs hate Americans...No. Arabs love lots of facets of the American way of life. But they're not fond of American policies."⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Jim Rutenberg, *The New York Times*, December 23, 2001, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9F0D61631F930A15751C1A9679C8B63&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=all> (accessed September 08, 2008).

Chapter 4: Exchange Construct

Many of the tools that promote change are not in the hands of the government. The dynamic dimensions of life today are largely in the private sector, not in the government. Nongovernmental organizations, private foundations, businesses, universities, and citizens undertake innovative and exciting activities every day that boost the power and attractiveness of the American model.

-CSIS Commission on Smart Power⁹¹

How to Conduct Exchange

Artistic exchange is not a new concept. There are retreats for established and aspiring writers and artists can come and speak with each other, but there is traditionally limited, or no, collaboration on joint projects. For the exchange to be successful there should be pre-established boards that focus on certain countries and regions. There should be a complete proposal for the exchange describing what country is going to be focused on for a certain project, the budget, and how many people are needed in residence for development, pre-production, production, and post production estimates. There should be an application season to include submission of artistic portfolios and an artist's statement of intent. It should be understood that the true value to the artist would be the sense of professional accomplishment, collaboration, and giving back to the world a global community service.

⁹¹ CSIS, "CSIS Commission on Smart Power: A Smarter, more secure America," 2007.

A viable framework for setting up this program would be through a Fulbright-type exchange working through projects under an NGO construct. NGOs have popularity and legitimacy, and because of this it translates into donations and volunteers.⁹² NGOs are private organizations that can be funded whole or in part by public organizations and governments. An NGO differs from the BBG due to the non-profit (501)(c)(3) status of the BBG. The BBG is still at the mercy of the U.S. government regarding approved content. As of September 11, 2001, \$670 million for the BBG dwarfs the \$11 million budget for cultural exchanges and exchanges.⁹³ There is ample exchange money, as illustrated by the 2008 proposed Fulbright exchange budget for 2008 of \$ 486 million.⁹⁴ It would be tempting to have the U.S. government approve all content, especially if the U.S. is funding the program, but the true strength of such an exchange would be the investment in foreign influencers celebrating American values for generations to come. This would exponentially celebrate and advertise the values of the United States. It is easy for U.S. government leadership to be worried about the type of products that such an

⁹² Manuel Castells, "The New Public Sphere: Global Civil Society, Communication Networks, and Global Governance," ed. Geoffrey Cowan and Nicholas J. Cull, *The Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science* (Sage Publications) 616 (2008), p.85

⁹³ Cynthia P Schneider and Kristina Nelson, "The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World-Mightier Than The Sword: Arts and Culture in the U.S.-Muslim World Relationship," *The Brookings Institute*, June 2008,
http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2008/06_islamic_world_schneider/06_islamic_world_schneider.pdf (accessed January 22, 2009), p.25

⁹⁴ Nancy Snow, "International Exchanges and the U.S. Image," ed. Geoffrey Cowan and Nicholas J. Cull, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (Sage Publications) 616 (March 2008), p.217

NGO will produce in terms of veering at times from the party line, and allowing an unflattering portrayal. Allowing criticism regarding past judgments and dissenting points of view creates additional credibility to build on. In comparison, the United Kingdom had major credibility problems with the U.S. in 1940. Americans were wary of any information aimed at bringing the neutral U.S. into World War II. In response, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) emphasized credibility and reported stories whether they were critical of the UK or not. The UK was able to escape the reputation for blatant propaganda it had earned during World War I, and mollifying American opinion.⁹⁵ The NGO will have the advantages of credibility as the home of the exchange, dispelling any myths that the filmmaker exchange is subversive or dishonestly controlled by the U.S. government.

Agenda for projects

There should be no alternative agenda for these projects beyond identifying key regions that the U.S. would be interested in gaining more visibility of its ideals and values. In return, the U.S. would be receive the gold standard in the entertainment industry to work on projects that promote these ideals and values as a means of bridging cross-cultural understanding and dialogue.

⁹⁵ Nicholas J. Cull, "Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories," ed. Geoffrey Cowan and Nicholas J. Cull, *The Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science* (Sage Publications) 616 (2008).p.42-43

How to recruit for projects

There is an inherent desire within the artistic community to collaborate with fellow film industry personnel. Certain award-winning international actors desire to work with certain directors or producers and vice versa. This would be a strong motivating factor for collaboration. Another motivating factor would be for an artist to tell a story seldom told. The NGO-sponsored project would have the potential to bring international visibility to a story that otherwise might not ever be known because of profit concerns.

Budgeting

Expenses should be kept as low as possible. These films would not be made in the same vein as Hollywood blockbusters, but more along the modesty of an independent or documentary film based more on substance than excess. Budgeting for the participants should include no more than a small stipend, room and board for the retreat, and airfare to and from the United States. The environment and the atmosphere should be one of communal collaboration and cultural discovery. Members who partake in the activity should have an understanding and pride in the fact that they are contributing to cross-cultural exchange with living legends and up and coming talent. The artists are donating their time as cultural diplomats. The fruit of the collaboration is the reward and potential for funding. As the organization builds strength and reputation, it is more likely that there will be endowed chairs and private as well as public donations. Participating studios will receive minor incentives from the government for equipment use, but should not be able to exploit the project for financial gain.

Past Exchanges

Exchanges so far have been limited to workshops and labs, but continue to create positive effects. A recent positive example is Palestinian filmmaker Hany Abu Assad, director of the feature film *Paradise Now* in 2005, chronicling the days leading up to a planned suicide bombing conducted by two Palestinian friends on Israeli soldiers. The movie exposes the pointless hypocrisy of the situation and self-doubt of the suicide bombers as they struggle to decide whether to conduct the mission or not. This is a case where the credibility of the filmmaker (Palestinian) with a cultural understanding of the people was able to tell a complex story that bridged multiple cultural divides succeeding both artistically and commercially. This movie was a nominee for best foreign language film for the Golden Globes and the Academy Awards, and it won the Golden Globe. The Sundance Film Festival Middle East Screenwriter's Lab mentored Assad prior to the film.⁹⁶

Through such a film production exchange, understanding is fostered, and projected to the world through art. One of the examples of successful exchange is a British program called Visiting Arts. The objective is to bring artists and performers from various countries to the United Kingdom. This is more aimed at the receptivity of the United Kingdom as they accept the culture, art, and performance of the visiting

⁹⁶ Cynthia P Schneider and Kristina Nelson, "The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World-Mightier Than The Sword: Arts and Culture in the U.S.-Muslim World Relationship," *The Brookings Institute*, June 2008, p.6

artists/performers. This is highly important, as is actual physical exchange. There should be producers, directors, gaffers, actors, writers, script supervisors, and the like. The key is a highly structured organization with projects that are collaborated on by experts within the field. This is being done to a certain degree at present, but the collaboration piece from concept to product is not in place. This collaboration on a larger scale is key in order to create and foster relationships at present and in the future. There is an interest in U.S. film and export, but the capability for the international community to embrace ideas can more easily be bridged by a local filmmaker who understands the nuances of their respective cultures.⁹⁷

VIEWS OF AMERICAN EXPORTS							
	<i>Positive views of...</i>				<i>Positive views of...</i>		
	U.S. movies music & TV %	U.S. science & tech %	Spread of U.S. ideas* %		U.S. movies music & TV %	U.S. science & tech %	Spread of U.S. ideas* %
Canada	73	74	22	Kuwait	53	88	10
Argentina	50	51	10	Lebanon	71	74	38
Bolivia	49	71	19	Morocco	42	55	12
Brazil	69	74	23	Palestinian ter.	23	67	3
Chile	58	67	24	Israel	72	73	56
Mexico	53	62	23	Pakistan	4	36	4
Peru	50	78	29	Bangladesh	14	81	25
Venezuela	71	76	37	Indonesia	50	84	11
Britain	63	74	21	Malaysia	54	83	16
France	65	71	18	China	42	80	38
Germany	62	65	17	India	23	64	29
Italy	66	74	25	Japan	70	81	42
Spain	72	61	16	South Korea	49	85	38
Sweden	77	73	28	Ethiopia	58	92	54
Bulgaria	51	67	25	Ghana	54	88	43
Czech Republic	58	56	20	Ivory Coast	86	97	79
Poland	65	71	23	Kenya	51	87	45
Russia	38	32	14	Mali	68	88	45
Slovakia	61	58	23	Nigeria	59	86	51
Ukraine	47	46	20	Senegal	62	88	32
Turkey	22	37	4	South Africa	70	80	41
Egypt	39	69	13	Tanzania	29	63	12
Jordan	50	68	12	Uganda	54	75	45

**"Good that American ideas and customs are spreading here."

⁹⁷ Ibid.p. 8

Structure:

The structure for exchange should be based upon Non-Governmental Organization type structure. Decreased ability of nationally based political systems to manage international problems on a global scale has induced the rise of a global civil society.⁹⁸ The funding should be coming from the U.S. government for certain deliverables, but the agenda and the freedom to create certain projects should be largely at the discretion of the Independent Exchange. Working in an NGO type construct aids in working with non-state actors who in turn, dismiss the notion that the Independent Exchange is a type of government project to spread propaganda. The NGO construct of itself brings credibility and a sense of expertise and experience. The Canadian polling company Globe Scan surveyed 1,000 people in each of the Group of 20 industrialized and developing countries and found that 65 percent of people trust NGOs to work in the best interests of society, as opposed to 45 percent of people trusting national governments to work in the best interests of society.⁹⁹ For practical purposes, the NGO type construct would have to be organized similarly to a functioning film studio.

⁹⁸ Manuel Castells, "The New Public Sphere: Global Civil Society, Communication Networks, and Global Governance," ed. Geoffrey Cowan and Nicholas J. Cull, *The Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science* (Sage Publications) 616 (2008).p.83

⁹⁹ GlobeScan Inc., *Poll Findings Suggest Trouble Ahead for the Globalization Agenda*, April 30, 2001, http://www.globescan.com/news_archives/GIM_globalization.pdf (accessed August 22, 2008).

The Writers:

This should be a multi-step process. There should initially be a writer's retreat where writers from different countries collaborate together on ideas for compelling, timely, and pertinent ideas for a film through a story summary. There should be several projects running at the same time. This gives a chance for writers of fiction, non-fiction, essays, playwrights, poets, journalists, and screenwriters from different countries to work on specific projects. Writers with similar concept interests (but not necessarily similar opinions) could work together on ideas and turn the story summary into a screenplay in collaboration, cutting across cultural divides. The writers will be teamed up with other writers who are not from the same ethnic or cultural background. One of the dominant motivating factors of the writers will be to work with world renowned international counterparts and creating a message, a narrative to be understood and heard around the world. Additionally this would be a fertile ground for discourse among some of the intellectual and artistic elite that would potentially lead to additional ideas and fostering further relationships.

The Producers:

The producers will look at the scripts, evaluate the content, work towards clarification, and work towards accomplishment of the particulars in the script at budget with the contributing writers. Although out of the control of the U.S. government, this would not be a method to create films that bash U.S. policies or activities. The producers will have a combination of experience; at least one U.S. executive producer and an international producer from the target country will work together. The producers would

be the managers of the project from conception to finish, working in an academic “in residence” capacity. The producers would be from both the studios and the independent film scene with a vested interest in expanding the film genre to different untapped demographics. This collaborative environment would consist of some of the best international writers, producers, directors, actors, editors, cinematographers, and musicians, as well as unknown but rising talents in the industry.

The Directors:

The directors will then be brought in by the producers to evaluate the scripts, and find out which ones play to a particular director’s strengths and interests. The directors, as are the writers and producers, will be paired up with a director from the country of origin of the subject matter. The directors would work with the producers on the shooting schedule and work with others in the industry on shooting locations. Jobs for the first assistant director, second assistant director would be screened through a portfolio review process with a combination of experience levels. The directors would then begin to conduct, or to work with a casting director to cast the actors for the roles.

Processes to get the products of the exchanges back to target populations:

Currently the new media environment combined with the spread of the Internet has vastly increased the ability for creative expression and transmission. Regarding less tolerant regimes and technological access, “Although suppression of critical voices has continued under authoritarian regimes from Morocco to Iran, the viral nature of the Internet and the popularity of TV shows and censors often insulate them from

sensors.”¹⁰⁰ The way to get the films back to the local populations of the target countries would be through a downloadable Internet system and/or free DVD distribution through host nation sources. This would have to be tailored depending on the specific demographics, technological considerations and socioeconomic factors of the country. Another possibility is to use interested film distributors to screen the movies in movie theaters if practical and economically feasible. There should not be any overt involvement through the Department of State for fear that this is a U.S. government directed project, such as a State Department screening of the film.

The Way Ahead:

What is produced in business, to include the entertainment industry has an initially obvious question regarding all pursuit. Will it be profitable? Will it make money? Will it appeal to a large enough percentage of the population so it makes more money than is lost through overhead, research and development, and advertising? Is this assumption of profit accurate, and is it worth the risk given these certain assumptions? Basic business strategies remain necessary for good business, but oftentimes make it difficult for movies to be made that broaden horizons and focus on the interests of smaller or niche markets. These markets may not have the money to go to the movie or a country or region may be lacking in their ability to promote distribution or representation.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid p.22

Due to the business nature of the entertainment industry, it is the content that suffers and caters to the largest demographic who will spend money on tickets. Adversely, much of what comes out of the traditional Hollywood system is viewed as offensive or at a minimum, difficult to understand. The main damage is the limited content, and thus the outreach capabilities.

Conclusion:

Polls since 2001 indicate that the United States of America currently suffers from severe credibility loss in the world. The international community once viewed the United States as the only true beacon of freedom but now looks down on the government as a contradictory, untruthful, and pedestrian. It is important to make the distinction between artistic exchanges simply for the sake of an artistic exchange. Champions of strategic communication are not party specific. From Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to President Barack Obama, the point has been stated that the United States needs strong and relevant Strategic Communication. As the United States continues to wrestle with a way to reach out to the world, a very altruistic spirit has guided much of the efforts. Some of these efforts have been perceived as foolhardy, some as confusing or arrogant, and some as brazen propaganda. This credibility has stunted even the best of our Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication efforts and frustrated some of the most dedicated and brightest people within the Strategic Communication community. Credibility has weakened all elements of national power causing a disproportionate effort and strains. Ultimately this is a challenge to our National Security.

International exchange would bring together respected filmmakers, producers, and writers to continue narrative and build dialogue, *real dialogue* between the U.S. and the far reaches of the globe. The only hope that the U.S. has to create true strength and power is through this outreach with other cultures. It is ignorance and fear that make nations weak. The elements of Strategic Communication tend to rely on “cultural experts” to help devise “messages.” Despite the employment of cultural experts, and professional Strategic Communication contractors or agencies, much of the subtleties can

be missed and can appear designed to mislead or fool the intended audience, and at financial costs that the United States has had to bear the burden for. Even more important than the large amount of money spent on Strategic Communication is the widening credibility gap through true or perceived dishonesty. For the artistic exchange, the money is there and the talent is there. The aim of the program is to have filmmakers illuminate conditions throughout the world that the national security strategy dictates is important to the United States national security.

As an example, a citizen of Myanmar is more likely to be interested in their own language, with culturally interesting, timely, and relevant subject matter made with regional movie actors, directors, writers. The film would be from a more credible source and would be subject matter that a citizen of Myanmar would be able to relate to and understand due to personal experience.

In the example of Myanmar: A citizen of Myanmar or a Myanmar-American develops a concept for a film. The concept is presented to the filmmaker exchange NGO (FEN) with criteria associated with the production (shooting schedule for how many days necessary, initial script/story/summary, proposed number of people and facilities needed for the production, and proposed budget for the activities of the film (not a budget for personal payments)). The FEN will evaluate the filmmaker or artist's portfolio, achievements, reputation, the subject matter of the script, the budget, available resources, personnel available, any nationality issues, time necessary for the project, and further evaluate the potential and FEN's potential interest in sponsoring the film, and the potential for professional U.S. filmmakers to take the time to contribute to the project. Upon a final board consensus by the FEN (Board members would be a small cadre of distinguished and responsible filmmakers, actors, screenwriters) there will then begin a

series of initial planning meetings for pre-production and establishing fixed time-tables for certain stages of production, and a closer evaluation of the costs of the product, and assessment of other variables that might arise due to the production. The FEN will then delegate the project to an in resident producer (RP) who is an experienced professional film producer who works for the FEN as permanent employee. The RP will manage the production from start to finish and ensure that the project is on schedule, on task, and on purpose. The RP of the project will have a small staff to ensure that timelines are being met and that the content being filmed is consistent with the initial project proposal, and to aid in resolving issues that are likely to arise with such a production. The filmmaker exchange personnel involved in the production would be given a stipend and room and board during the time allotted for the film. The FEN will own the completed product of the film, with a very small percentage of the proceeds going to a charity (if applicable), the film crew (if applicable), or back into the budget of the F (if applicable). Schedules would be very tight regarding amount of days to complete the project, as well as pre-production, and post-production activities). The final cut would then be evaluated and considered by the FEN for film festivals, release locations, airing, and on which medium(s) (internet, narrative on the radio, theaters, DVD, or a combination) it will be released.

The power of this is exponential, and arguably better than any U.S. directed, contractor concocted, highly expensive, Strategic Communications campaign regarding Myanmar. The project would highlight social issues pertinent to Myanmar in a project with subject matter and plot lines and cultural nuances conceived by Myanmar writers and political scientists. The project would be a co-production between joint U.S. and Myanmar directors (and U.S. and Myanmar subordinate members of the film crew) and

possible actors (depending on the relevance of U.S. actors to the script). Myanmar musicians or music would be on the soundtrack, and the RP would ensure that the project was conducted responsibly without using the film as a pulpit for attacking the U.S. or U.S. policies. The film would be edited to include and post-production, then completed for airing. The project would be one of several going concurrently with multiple films from multiple nations generated annually.

The United States nearly owned the global informational element since the global export of Hollywood earned the respect of the world through depictions of characters making identifiable difficult choices of right over wrong or good over bad. Those black and white days of such naïveté and simplicity in characterizations of problems and situations are now gone due to a more informed and skeptical global audience.

There is a certain language of cinema; the music, the editing, the lighting, the shooting of the film, and the subtleties and nuances of the subtext of the script and gestures of the actors. If the filmmaking is done properly by respecting and considering cultural considerations through collaboration in production, it can have an incredibly powerful effect on a demographic/region. This begins to rebuild trust as other countries see that the United States does understand their corner of the world, or at least people of the United States are working closely with the host nation artists to emphasize certain issues or problems. This film element in an NGO construct should be a small subset of Strategic Communication, not replacement of it.

Strong nations reach out to others and seek to understand them. The values of our Founding Fathers continue to be pertinent and should continue to be held close in our state affairs. George Washington remarked in his Farewell Address: “I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs that honesty is always the best

policy.”¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ George Washington, *Rediscovering George Washington*,
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